



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Department
Office of Housing and Economic Development
Press Release**

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OBAMA ADMINISTRATION AWARDS
MASSACHUSETTS \$720,856 GRANT TO ASSIST WITH
EXPORT PROMOTION

BOSTON – December 3, 2012 – The Patrick-Murray Administration today announced that Massachusetts was awarded a \$720,856 grant from the United States Small Business Administration, which will help enhance international trade opportunities for small businesses.

"Exports are critical to growth in the Commonwealth," said Governor Deval Patrick. "These resources will help our small businesses compete and win in the global economy."

"After recently visiting Germany, one of the Commonwealth's top export partners, I see great opportunities for how resources like the STEP Grant can help Massachusetts companies thrive," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray. "We thank the Obama Administration for continuing with this program, and we encourage more Massachusetts small businesses to learn of available resources through STEP to stay competitive in our global economy."

The grant is part of the State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) grant initiative, part of President Obama's Small Business Jobs Act of 2010. The program is designed to increase the value of exports for small businesses already in practice, and attract more small businesses to considering exports. Massachusetts businesses currently export over \$27 billion per year globally.

The grant will be administered by the Massachusetts Office of International Trade & Investment (MOITI) in partnership with the Massachusetts Export Center, and will be used to support the second year of MOITI's Massachusetts Export Initiative (MEI). In the first year the program was awarded \$614,025 and 60 Massachusetts companies participated, with funds enabling them to attend overseas trade shows and trade conferences, translate marketing materials and manuals, and gain access to matching services offered by the U.S. Department of Commerce, among other opportunities. With over \$100,000 in additional funds allocated this year the Massachusetts STEP Program will continue to foster targeted assistance to businesses in the Commonwealth.

"We are excited to receive this grant from the Small Business Administration and begin work on the second phase of the Massachusetts Export Initiative," said Ken Brown, Executive Director of MOITI. "The increased funding will provide important resources for our small businesses to compete in an increasingly global economy."

In order to reach businesses across the Commonwealth, MOITI, in collaboration with state and federal government agencies, quasi-government agencies and local partners, will engage in an economic development roadshow to promote the STEP Program and other international business development resources.

“We are delighted to partner again with MOITI to offer the STEP Grant to Massachusetts businesses,” said Paula Murphy, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Export Center. “Last year’s program helped to directly fund activities critical to the success of the Commonwealth’s small business exporters, and we look forward to helping even more small businesses enhance their global competitiveness through this year’s program.”

“The STEP Grant initiative came at an ideal time for Blackinton,” said David Long, COO of V.H. Blackinton & Co., Inc. “About three years ago we launched an export initiative to grow our Massachusetts based manufacturing company. With the benefit of the STEP grant funding in 2012 we were able to visit Brazil and also invest in various international marketing initiatives. Our international sales will grow over 40 percent this year. And, we have added manufacturing jobs.”

“SBA has the products and services to help small businesses grow through exporting, including export counseling and finance programs,” said Robert H. Nelson, Massachusetts District Director. “Another tool is the State Trade and Export Program which is designed to help small business exporters reach new markets. In Massachusetts, the SBA is pleased that its STEP partner, the Massachusetts Office of International Trade and Investment, has been awarded \$720,856 in the second round of funding to support the Commonwealth’s promising exporters.”

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